

The Good, The Bad, The Ugly... But God's Gracious Love Remains

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[0 : 00] Please take your Bibles and go to the book of Judges.

The book of Judges, if you're visiting with us, you can go in that black Bible in the chair in front of you, start in Genesis and find page 186 and 187 in that black Bible.

Judges chapter 8. Judges chapter 8. I'm going to do Judges chapter 8. Actually, we're not going to do verses 33 to 35, technically.

I'm going to save that for next time because it goes with chapter 9 better. So we're technically going to do just the first 32 verses. Again, Judges chapter 8, page 186 in that black Bible.

And I wanted to let you know too, so Jane's gone, so that's why I'm doing the music. And then next week I'm gone, so Kalen is actually going to do four songs for us with his guitar so you can make sure you give him your support and help him with that as he's going to be trying to do that.

[1 : 21] So I appreciate the guys stepping up. Travis is going to teach the adult class. Thanks, Travis. The guy's just going to be there to be available, so I appreciate that. So thank you for supporting them in that way.

Judges chapter 8. This is fun. Let's read it. Then the men of Ephraim said to him, What is this thing you've done to us, not calling us win?

You went to fight against Midian. And they contended with Gideon vigorously. But he said to them, What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the gleanings of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?

God has given the leaders of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, into your hands. What was I able to do in comparison with you? Then their anger toward him subsided when he said that. Then Gideon and 300 men who were with him came to the Jordan, crossed over, weary yet pursuing.

And he said to the men of Succoth, Please give loaves of bread to the people who are following me, for they're weary, and I'm pursuing Zeba and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian and leaders of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zeba and Zalmunna already in your hands, that we should give bread to your army?

[2 : 34] And Gideon said, All right. When Yahweh has given Zeba and Zalmunna into my hand, then I will thrash your bodies with the thorns of the wilderness and with briars. That's nice.

And he went up from there to Peniel and spoke similarly to them, excuse me, and the men of Peniel, answered him just as the men of Succoth had answered. So he spoke also to the men of Peniel, saying, When I return safely, I will tear down this tower.

Now Zeba and Zalmunna were in Kakor, and their armies with them, about 15,000 men, all who were left of the internal army of the sons of the east, for the fallen were 120,000 swordsmen.

And Gideon went up by the way of those who lived in tents on the east of Noba and Jagbeha, and attacked the camp when the camp was unsuspecting. And Zeba and Zalmunna fled.

He pursued them. When Zeba and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them and captured the two kings of Midian, Zeba and Zalmunna, and routed the whole army. Then Gideon, verse 13, the son of Joash, returned from the battle by the ascent of Heraz, and he captured a youth from Succoth and questioned him.

[3 : 38] Then he wrote down for Gideon the princes of Succoth and its elders, 77 men. And he came to the men of Succoth and said, Behold Zeba and Zalmunna concerning whom you taunted me, saying, Are the hands of Zeba and Zalmunna ready in your hand that we should give bread to the men who are weary?

And he took the elders of the city and thorns of the wilderness and briars, and he disciplined the men of Succoth with them. And he tore down the tower of Penueel and killed the men of the city. Then he said to Zeba and Zalmunna, What kind of men were they whom you killed at Tabor?

And they said they were like you, each one resembling the son of a king. And he said, They were my brothers, sons of my mother. As the Lord lives, if only you had let them live, I would not kill you.

So he said to Jether, his firstborn, rise, kill them. But the youth did not draw his sword, for he was afraid, because he was still a youth. And Zeba and Zalmunna said, Rise up yourself and follow on us, for as the man so is his strength.

So Gideon arose and killed Zeba and Zalmunna and took the crescent ornaments, which were on their camel's necks. Verse 22. Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, Rule over us, both you and your son, and your son's son, for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian.

[4 : 50] But Gideon said to them, I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you. Yahweh shall rule over you. Yet Gideon said to them, By the way, I would request of you, each of you give me an earring from his spoil.

For they had gold earrings because those men were Ishmaelites, and they said, We will surely give them. So they spread out a garment, and every one of them threw an earring there from his spoil. And the weight of the gold earrings that he requested was 1,700 shekels of gold.

Besides the crescent ornaments and the pendants and the purple robes which were on the kings of Midian, and besides the neckbands that were on the camel's necks, and Gideon made it into an ephod and placed it in his city, Ophrah, and all Israel played the harlot with it there.

So it became a snare to Gideon and his household. Verse 28. So Midian was subdued before the sons of Israel, and they did not lift up their heads anymore, and the land was undisturbed for 40 years in the days of Gideon.

Then Jeroboam, son of Joash, went and lived in his own house. Now Gideon had 70 sons who were his direct descendants, for he had many wives.

[5 : 59] His concubine, who was in Shechem, also bore him a son, and he named him My Dad's King. That's what Abimelech means. And Gideon, the son of Joash, died at a ripe old age and was buried in the tomb of his father, Joash, in Ophrah, of the Abirazites.

You're familiar with this little tune, this little song. As a matter of fact, most people are. They probably just don't know where it's from, you know. Wah, wah, wah.

You laugh because you know it. My kids are like, oh yeah. It's from the 1967 movie, The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly. Some of you are like, I was there when it opened.

Starring Clint Eastwood, which I didn't know this, it catapulted him into stardom, that movie. It was actually the last of a trilogy. There was three movies. And this one, The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly, in 1967 was the last of that.

But that song was known everywhere, even though most, anyone from like 40 down don't know where it's from necessarily.

[7 : 11] The good, the bad, and the ugly. You know, humans are like that. And I don't mean physiologically speaking. You got some people who are good, some people who are bad, some people who are really ugly looking. I don't mean that. What I mean is the way people are.

Sometimes people can be very good. Sometimes people can be bad. Sometimes people can be just very ugly.

I was telling my wife, maybe my kids do, last Thursday I was running, walking down Main Street. If the white line's here, I usually run on the street.

But then if there's a car coming, I go on that side of the white line. It's from out of the street, right? And usually people, they give me like three feet. Some people like go all the way over five feet. Well, this guy was coming up.

He wasn't moving at all. And I kind of went, I'm like, what are you doing? He full on just started yelling at me. His windows were down. Just yelling, why are you going? I'm like, I can't believe this.

[8 : 18] Here's another good thing. Last Sunday, I'm driving home. No joke, this was actually funny. See, 898 is 45. I'm going 50. Coming right up to the intersection.

Green light. No joke, this guy pulls right out in front of me. I'm like, whoa, look at my mirrors. Oh no. Change lanes. Almost hit the guy.

So what does he do? He starts yelling at me. He's like, I just started laughing. I just couldn't get, I thought it was so funny. So then, excuse me, we come up to a nurse section and he comes up next to me.

He's looking at me and just grung. I'm just, I couldn't stop laughing. I thought it was just so funny. You gotta be kidding me. You got in front of me. I mean, I almost hit you. I mean, he would have crushed my Prius, right?

He had a big van. People can be very ugly. I can be very ugly.

[9 : 24] So can you. Christians can act like this too, can't we? We can be very mean. And this is where in Christ's body, we need to show this gracious love.

You know, Judges is about God's overwhelming, never-ending, relentless love for his people. And I titled the message this morning, excuse me a second.

Excuse me, I titled the message this morning, the good, the bad, the ugly, but God's gracious love remains.

The good, the bad, the ugly, but God's gracious love remains. In the midst of our good, our bad, our ugly, God's gracious love stays.

Not because he approves of us being bad or ugly, but because he's very gracious. Remember the sub-theme for Judges, the sub-theme is he wants us to solely want him, and he'll discipline us to make that happen.

[10 : 49] He disciplines us so that he be our one and only love, and then notice I added this, and then we reflect that same love towards each other. He uses our badness and our ugliness to show his grace, because it was while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

While we were still his enemies, he showed mercy. While we were against him, he showed grace. Another way to put it, just the whole chapter here, first 32 verses, God's gracious love remains on his people through their good, their bad, and their ugly, not because he approves of it, you're ugly and you're bad, but because he's very gracious, and he'll do what it takes so that we chiefly love him.

He'll do what it takes. It's not because he approves of that, but because he's very gracious to us.

He shows his gracious love to his people. And here's the thing, when we grasp a hold of his gracious love for his people, it's when we love and enjoy him, it will spill out in love for the body of Christ.

You know, you come here in Judges, you look at chapter 6, like, well, Gideon's like, yeah, there's my boy.

[12 : 32] And chapter 7, you're like, yeah, Gideon. And then things just start getting weird. Don't they? Okay. First of all, there's no communication between Yahweh and Gideon.

Did you notice that? Nothing. I mean, there's lots of that in chapter 6. In chapter 7, too. Nothing in chapter 8. That's odd.

Or rather, nothing's recorded. And it looks like Gideon started to act like a king in the way he treated his brethren. He allowed them to disillusion him.

So was he right in what he did? Were they right in what they did? I mean, see, here you see God use weak Gideon to show his glory, and then what happened?

It's hard to tell. Was Gideon wrong in doing these things? Were the people wrong in doing these things? What about him refusing to be king? Yeah. His actions spoke louder than his words.

[13 : 41] We'll look at that in a moment. I mean, he did do good to Israel. We're not looking at this today, but you see in verse 35, in accord with all the good that he had done to Israel.

So there was good there. He kept Israel from worshipping Baal. Well, that's a good thing. What about the people?

Were they wrong? His seemingly thirst for power and violence came out. You'll see that in a couple weeks in chapter 9. But then it seemed like the people have responded poorly as well.

And we're going to look at this a little bit more in a moment. Whether it's right or wrong, here's the point. God is gracious with the bad and the ugly, and that's the response we should have with each other as people. If you miss anything in this message, don't miss this.

In the end, here's the challenge. In the end, we love the body because we love Christ, because the body is his body, and because his body is the great display of his grace, coming down to die on behalf of the body.

[14 : 52] So love Christ and his body. If you miss anything, don't miss this. I'll give it to you two more times in the message this morning.

It's so appropriate as well. We're looking at a passage like this, which is gleaming and glaring at us, the challenge to love each other as his body in this way.

And guess what we're going to celebrate together? The Lord's Supper. It's a reflection of our unity together. It's a reflection of our love for each other as his church, as his people.

At the end of the day, we love the body of Christ because we love Christ, because the body is his body, and because his body is the great display of his grace, and that grace was displayed in him coming down, as it says in Galatians, he gave himself for our sins.

So love Christ and his body. I'll put it another way. You can't love Jesus and not his body. You can't be a person who says, I love Jesus, but I don't love his body. That doesn't make sense.

[16 : 08] Notice as it begs, becoming a member of a church, becoming a part of a local church, connecting yourself to a local church, where you're loving each other this way, because God loves us, and we love him.

I got two main points, pretty simple. First, number one, God's people are sinners and need gracious love. You see the first 17 verses.

Look, every Christian has his or her bad points. God's people are sinners and they need gracious love. Every Christian has his or her good points and bad points.

It's true. It's true. And we need to realize this. Because so many times people get hurt in churches.

And that's true. I've been hurt. You probably have been too. By Christians. By people who call themselves Christians.

[17 : 24] But guess what? They're sinners. They need gracious love. You know, God shows his gracious love to us in Christ. We should show grace too.

I mean, look how it begins. The first three verses. Ephraim, they get ticked off. What's this thing you've done, not calling us, but you went to fight against Midian?

Ephraim had a proud heritage. They were insulted. Who do you think you are? Calling Israel to come against Midian without us. Ephraim, they were the largest tribe.

And they made sure everyone knew about it too. I'm part of Ephraim. You think you're better than us, Gideon?

And then Gideon responded, what have I done, verse two, what have I done in comparison with you?

[18 : 31] It's such a glean. I feel better than the vintage. Oh, look at what you guys have done. I haven't done anything in comparison with you. He assuaged your feelings, kind of, you know, just kissing up to them, kind of, yeah.

He complimented them and put himself down. And if he not had done this, he would have been at war with Ephraim.

As a matter of fact, in a few weeks, Jephthah did this. Ephraim did the very same thing to Jephthah. You know what he did? He's like, really? You want to do this? I'll take you guys out right now.

And he went to war with Ephraim. And he actually beat them. They went away with their tail between the legs. You'll see that later. Well, and then you have verses 4-17.

This whole thing with the people of Succoth and Peniel flat out refused to help Gideon. And from Gideon's perspective, taunting him, notice verse 6, are the leaders of Succoth, and leaders of Succoth, they said, are the hands of Ziba and Zalmunna already in your hands?

[19 : 34] In other words, are the palms of the kings in your hands? It's almost kind of taken literally. Have you cut off their hands? Are they in your, that's kind of almost the idea. They asked sarcastically.

And the interpretation of their question is, no. And they were taunting him about not subduing these two kings.

Maybe it was out of fear. Maybe it was out of insecurity. They mock Gideon. They don't want helping them all. Maybe because they were fearing, endangering themselves from Midian. Well, what if Gideon loses and then Midian comes against us?

Who knows why? We're not told. So in both cases, verse 7, all right. I'll thrash your bodies with thorns of the wilderness and with briars.

I'm going to tear down this tower. And let them have it, punishing them for what they did, or what they did not do. There's going to be repercussions.

[20 : 35] I mean, he did so much, they could care less. So we read this and then you go into verse 13. He captures this youth. Youth writes down the 77 elders of the city.

He says to them, Behold, remember you were taunting me? He took the elders of the city and he disciplined them with the thorns and the briars and then he killed the men of the city.

I mean, does this not bring questions to your mind? It should. Who's at fault here? Did these cities do something wrong?

Or did Gideon do wrong? Should Gideon have asked Yahweh what to do with these two cities? Shouldn't he? How do we know he didn't? And it's interesting, you read, when you study this, you read different things and by commentators.

One guy says, oh yeah, Gideon was so wrong in this and blah, blah, blah. But then another guy says, oh, Gideon was so right, he was doing what God wanted him to do. Which is it?

[21 : 45] Well, Samuel doesn't tell you. Does he? He just tells you what happened. It is what it is. Whether they were right or wrong, what's the point?

God is patient with our wrong responses and because God is patient with our wrong responses, we should be patient with each other's wrong responses. You know what is a fact?

God delivered his people. He didn't need to do that. They were the morons who got themselves in this mess in the first place, weren't they?

They were the ones that did this. Not God. They were the ones that started following Baal. And he gave them to the hands of the Midianites.

He didn't need to deliver them. And did they repent? Remember? We talked about this. No. They just cried out to the Lord, oh, help us. Repentance? What? Repentance? What's that?

[22 : 45] We just need you to deliver us. Remember? Remember? Remember? Remember? Remember? Remember? God didn't need to do any of this. Do you see God's gracious love as God's people?

Are we ready to grace each other in those bad, ugly times? It doesn't mean we don't deal with the sin. I'm not saying that.

But maybe there's something else going on. You ever thought about that? Maybe that person, that brother or sister in crisis and pain, maybe they're just having a bad day.

Maybe that guy was having a bad day. It's easy to kick someone while they're down, isn't it? Especially another Christian. I understand.

It's hurtful, isn't it? I understand. We've been hurt. We know what that's like. You know, but it's, we should think of membership and being a part of a church like a marriage.

[23 : 57] It's a covenant that you make with each other. You're coveting with each other. I want you to be a part of my life. I can be a part of your life.

We're a part of each other's lives because that's what you do in a marriage. in sickness and in health and good times and bad times, right?

Well, now these days, these kids, they don't understand that. Well, you offended me, so we're getting a divorce, right? That's how it is now in our culture. And you know what?

That's how people treat the church. That's exactly what they do with the church. That's exactly what they do with membership. They don't care. Maybe they need us to come alongside of them.

Maybe they need us to stop and listen. You know, we need to balance between being too hard on each other and being too soft on each other. And I had this up here too.

[25 : 01] Our Lord, He was the perfect example of showing grace to His disciples. I mean, He was perfect in this. Because at times He would be strong with them. But He was so gracious to them.

You know, the other times He'd be like, what's wrong with you guys? Right? Jesus would be there. How long have I been with you? How long should I put up with you?

Bring them here to me. Remember that? That's right after the transfiguration, by the way. Jesus was perfect in this.

Jesus was perfect in this. So go to where you are, Lord. Go to your Savior to know how to show grace to each other. Because remember, in the end, remember, in the end, we love the body because we love Christ, because the body is His body, and because His body is the great display of His grace coming down to die on behalf of His body.

So love Christ in the body. That's why we're saying, I'm not as dumb as I look. That's why we're saying, oh, how good it is to prefer one another, to forgive as He forgives.

[26 : 17] That's the first point. Second point is similar to the first point. Leaders of God's people are sinners. They also need gracious love. every leader has his good points and bad points.

Me. Leaders of God's people were sinners too. We also need His gracious love.

We also need gracious love to be displayed to us. Every leader has his good points and bad points. Our hope must primarily be in the Lord, not in people, not in leaders.

It doesn't mean you don't trust leaders. It doesn't mean you don't obey your leaders. The writer of Hebrews says that. Hebrews 13, 17, obey your leaders and submit to them. But understand, they're fallen. I'm fallen.

I do stupid things. That's the way it is. And you see this unfolding and it seems like it.

[27 : 25] Starting in verse 18. He captured Zeban Zalmunna and they amended killing his full brothers, Gideon's full brothers.

So this was Gideon's personal vengeance on what these kings did. He started to act like a king. And he gave the honor to his son, rise and kill them.

You did not draw his sword. He was afraid. He shunned the task. And these kings, Zeban Zalmunna, they said, a true man would kill us. There's more honor to have Gideon do it.

So Gideon did. He struck them down. And notice, he took the little moons made of gold or silver there in the end of verse 21, which are on the camel's necks.

They actually worshiped the moon god. Why would Gideon take this? You'll find out later. Notice what happens in verse 22.

[28 : 25] The men of Israel rule over us. Now, the men of Israel, probably the Israelite leaders in the north. But Gideon's influence actually reaches far as Shechem. I mean, that's pretty south. For Gideon, he had unusual power as a judge.

His influence was pretty great. He was one of the big time judges. I mean, he's three chapters devoted to him. More than Samson. Rule over us. Verse 23.

I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you. The Lord shall rule over you. What a great guy. This section is odd. Because it seems like Gideon said no to becoming a king, but then, hey, by the way, since we're talking about kingship, how about you guys give me some of the spoil?

What kind of act was that? An act from a king. That's what a king would do. What's going on? His actions spoke louder than his words. His refusal was apparent.

Now, some people might say, no, no, no. See, you can go back and forth with this. Kind of accepted the kingship incognito. Give me the spoil.

[29 : 40] Notice, verse 25, they said, you will surely give them. So they spread out their garment. Verse 26, the weight of the gold earrings reached, he requested was 1,700 shekels of gold.

That's about 45 pounds of gold. Wow. What did he do with it? Verse 27, he made into an ephod.

Oh, that's great. You know what an ephod is, right? Let me refresh your memory. An ephod was part of the high priest's attire.

It was a sleeveless tunic made of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, fine linen. It had a breastplate attached. It had a pocket.

And in the pocket was this thing or things called the urim and the thummim. Probably like stones. And it was used by the high priest to discover God's will on particular matters.

[30 : 48] So, most likely, Gideon used it to obtain Yahweh's direction, which was not meant for him to do. It seemed like he was usurping this role.

The priests and the tabernacle, they were in Shiloh at the time. And the people received their directions from the priests, not from Gideon.

Because remember, I'm not going to rule, I'm not your king. Remember that? It says, apparently, Gideon's ephod was, his act was wrong. Notice, the next part of verse 27, all Israel played the harlot with it there, so it became a snare to Gideon and his household.

So it seems like he took on that role, hankering after more than what God had given him initially. Israel played the harlot with this ephod. They started worshipping the thing.

Nice. It became a snare to Gideon and his household. It was foolish of him to do this. So, it seems like Gideon acted like a priest and a king towards Israel.

[32 : 05] A priest and giving him direction and guidance by wearing this ephod and then a king by obtaining his spoils from the war and then having many sons. We'll look at that in just a moment. So was he hankering for more than what God had already given him?

It seems like it. But again, some guys say no, he wasn't. So what's the main point? He did lots of good to Israel but also did some pretty stupid unwise things.

And the same goes with me. I do a lot of, ask my wife, I do a lot of stupid, foolish things and guess what?

So do you. It's just a good thing that God is very gracious to us. I do stupid things and so do you. Might as well just admit it right now.

Right? We're all in the same boat here. That's why we take the Lord's Supper together. We're reminded of gospel truth together, right? God's grace.

[33 : 14] We don't deserve it. He takes us where we are in our lives but he'll do what it takes so that we love him and that we display him.

He'll do it. That's what Judges is all about. Interesting, verse 28. It's actually a really happy yet sad verse.

Midian was subdued before the sons of Israel and they did not lift up their heads anymore. Notice, the land was undisturbed for 40 years and days of Gideon. It's a happy and sad note because this is the last note of rest in Judges.

is the last note of rest that you have in the book of Judges. His wealth and prestige increased.

Jeroboel, he lived in his own house. He had 70 sons who were his direct descendants for he had many wives. Oh, wait a second. That's very kingly.

[34 : 23] That's what kings would do. They had a nice little harem. Why? So they can perpetuate their line. Why? Because they were the king. See? And then, this is great, his concubine was in Shechem, it's pretty south, bore him a son and he named him my dad's king.

What's your name? My dad's king. See that? What's your name? My dad's king. Wait a minute, I thought, see, no, no. In reality, he embraced ruling Israel.

Interesting too as well. The phrase, he died in a ripe old age. It shows his great status. Look, Gideon did good to Israel. No Baal worship, peace for 40 years.

Yeah, he has seeming thirst for power and violence. It's gonna come out in spades in chapter 9 showing just how evil, crooked, and wicked Israel had really become.

Because you get, we're gonna look at chapter 9, not next week, I'll be gone, the week after that, and you'll see, Abimelech, Abimelech, this guy was, he's nuts. This guy was psycho. And this is, this is how bad Israel had become.

[35 : 46] And yet, amid our good, bad, ugly, God's gracious love remains. Not because he approves of your bad, not because he approves of your ugly, because he doesn't.

He doesn't approve of it in me, he doesn't approve of it in you. But it's because he's very gracious. You know what he does? He uses your badness and he uses your ugliness to show his grace. And to humble you so you will see that you don't deserve his mercy.

That's what the gospel is all about. Because while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And this is for you, if you're here, you don't know Jesus. You're an enemy of God.

You have no business being before God in his face, in his presence at all, and yet he says, come, take refuge in me, I'll save you. Repent and trust Christ.

This is the heart of the gospel. God will show gracious love to you. Come. God's gracious love remains on his people through their good, through their bad, through their ugly, not because he approves of that stuff, they're bad and they're ugly, but because he's very gracious and he'll do what it takes that we chiefly love him.

[37 : 08] And when we love him and enjoy him, it'll spill out. At least it should. And our love for the body of Christ. Remember, if you miss anything, don't miss this.

In the end, we love the body because we love Christ, because the body is his body, and because his body is the great display of his grace coming down to die on behalf of the body.

So love Christ and his body. And the great display that we, way for us to display this in a tangible, physical way is the Lord's Supper.

I was, for some reason, I don't remember why, I was looking through my library and I saw this little booklet that I've read, it's been a while, understanding the Lord's Supper by Bobby Jameson.

Listen to what he says about the Lord's Supper. This is really neat. This rings true from what we looked at in Judges chapter 8. In the Lord's Supper, we have fellowship with Christ.

[38 : 15] Amen. Our fellowship with Christ creates fellowship with each other. As a local church, we're one body because we share in the one bread and all it represents.

Because we are united to Christ, we're united to each other in him. The Lord's Supper defines the company we keep as Christians. Christ, and in Christ, the church.

We're connected with each other. He says later, the Lord's Supper beautifully pictures what it means to be a Christian. This is why if you're here, you're not a Christian, not a follower of Jesus, this is not for you to partake.

Because it pictures what it means to be a Christian. Through Christ's sacrifice, Jameson says, through Christ's sacrifice for us on the cross, we have fellowship with him and also with his people.

That's why you just don't go in your closet and take the Lord's Supper. You can do that, but you've missed out on what it means to take the Lord's Supper. You should take it with the local body, the local church, people that you've committed yourself to.

[39 : 32] They've committed themselves to you. There's a covenant that you have with each other. He says, the gospel becomes not just something we hear or even something we see, but something we eat.

we taste the gospel. And does it become the body and blood of Christ? That's ridiculous. That's not in the Bible. But it points you to the sufficiency of Christ.

So you're actually, and it reminds you that trusting Jesus, becoming a Christian, you take in Christ and you assimilate him into your body. and as a body of Christ, that's the way we are a body.

We're functioning and working like a body works. That's just love and devotion that we have for each other or that we should have. That's why if you have something against, especially another Christian, that's why you shouldn't partake of the Lord's Supper.

You should first go reconcile with that Christian, non-Christian, but especially that Christian. Reconcile with them because if they're part of the body of Christ or part of the church universally and you have something against them, how can you have, sit there and proclaim the gospel and you have something against that person?

[40 : 50] See, it doesn't make sense. And this is why this is for Christians. Oh, and also, this is why you might say, hey, I'm not a member of this church, but look, if you come from a church of like faith and practice and we would prefer you've been baptized by immersion, you can partake of the Lord's Supper with us.

We want you and include you in that. But this is a picture of the gospel. So this is a great segue into us celebrating what Jesus has done for us as his people, as his body.

Would you pray with me? And so we thank you for this passage. Father, it's hard to know what's right or wrong in this, for what we do know is very true.

You graciously delivered Israel. You didn't have to. And they should have showed that same gracious love to each other.

And in more cases than not, they didn't. They did not show that love. So help us as a body to be devoted to each other in this way.

[42 : 21] Give us your grace, Father, to show this grace. I want to encourage you, which is what we do each week, a few moments of silence to fill your mind with Scripture, to fill your mind with gospel truth, examining your heart, preparing your heart for partaking of the Lord's Supper, and seeing how much you did not deserve this, and yet God has been gracious to show you his forgiveness.

Let the gospel ring true, and let it fill you, fill your mind. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Let that truth sink deeply into your heart in these few moments of silence. Then we'll take the next steps.